

Message Text

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17-12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /125 W
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R 281547Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1046

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 10497

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT IS

SUBJ: DOMESTIC POLITICAL TENSIONS MOUNT ON EVE OF KNESSET
ELECTION

REF: TEL AVIV 10489

1. ON EVE OF KNESSET ELECTION, TENSION BETWEEN LABOR ALIGNMENT
AND ITS MAIN COALITION PARTNER, THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS
PARTY, (NRP) HAS BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED, UNDER-
LINING FLUIDITY OF CURRENT INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE AND COMPLEX-
ITIES WHICH LIE AHEAD IN PROCESS OF FORMING NEXT GOVERNING
COALITION.

2. AN IMPORTANT INDEX OF MOUNTING FRICTION WAS NRP
ABSTENTION IN KNESSET VOTE DECEMBER 20 REGARDING ISRAELI
PARTICIPATION AT OPENING SESSIONS OF GENEVA CONFERENCE
BECAUSE GOI HAD ACCEPTED WORKING MEETINGS ON SATURDAYS.
SUBSEQUENTLY, AT CABINET MEETING DECEMBER 23, MRS MEIR
ANGRILY REFUSED TO ANSWER A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY NRP
MINISTERS REGARDING GENEVA CONFERENCE AND POSSIBLE ISRAEL-
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JORDAN TALKS ON SEPARATIMN OF FORCES, ON GROUNDS THAT

THESE QUESTIONS HAD ALREADY SURFACED IN ISRAELI PRESS.

3. NRP INTERIOR MINISTER BURG REPORTEDLY HAS ENTERED INTO A WRITTEN UNDERSTANDING THIS WEEK WITH RELIGIOUSLY-ORIENTED JEWISH SETTLERS IN HEBRON AND ETZION BLOC AREA, REAFFIRMING NRP'S HARDLINE POSITION AGAINST TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS ON JORDAN WEST BANK, AND IN SUPPORT OF JEWISH RIGHT TO ACQUIRE LAND IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

4. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A SENIOR EDITOR OF HAARETZ THAT SAPIR HAS BEEN LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR AN EFFORT TO BREAK UP THE NRP DURING NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMATION OF NEXT GOVERNING COALITION WITH GOAL OF ASSURING CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP OF NRP MODERATES AND LABOR ALIGNMENT. SAME SOURCE TOLD US THAT SAPIR IS ALSO ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF LIBERAL PARTY (GAHAL) FOR SIMILAR PURPOSES OF ENCOURAGING SPLIT FROM LIKUD AFTER ELECTIONS.

5. ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS MAKE IT LIKELY THAT COALITION NEGOTIATIONS WILLBE PROTRACTED BUT, AS REPORTED SEPTEL, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT MRS MEIR WILL SUCCEED IN TIME, ALBEIT WITH SOME DIFFICULTY, IN FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT.
KEATING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION FORECASTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TELAV10497
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973122/aaaaaaxb.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TEL AVIV 10489
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02-Jan-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <16-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DOMESTIC POLITICAL TENSIONS MOUNT ON EVE OF KNESSET ELECTION
TAGS: PINT, IS, LABOR ALIGNMENT PARTY, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005